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Reflection- FAE Chapter 4

I took philosophy for the first time over a decade ago in the fall of my freshman year. The immense lecture hall, considerable number of students, and complex delivery of curriculum rendered me frustrated and unmotivated. After earning an F for the semester, I enrolled into the same class again the following spring, opting for a different professor and a smaller classroom setting. Engaging and approachable, my professor encouraged participation and presented information in an accommodating, versatile and uncomplicated manner. My second attempt at getting a better grade enabled me to earn an A, while allowing me to discover a newfound love for philosophy.

Reading Chapter 4 of FAE allowed me to reflect on my experiences as a younger philosophy student, comparing the settings and teaching styles of the two different professors. Which philosophies did they favor? How did their preferences manifest in their work? What was the repercussion to their students?

Considering the philosophies in the text, I found myself identifying with components of each one: the Socratic method of Idealism, the idea of tabula rasa and the critical reasoning of Realism, the questioning, evolution and change of Pragmatism, the reflection and search for meaning of Existentialism, and the emphasis on nature and inner peace of the Eastern and North American ways of knowing. Although I have a general idea of what I favor in relation to educational ideals, I’ve realized that I have a long way to go in defining who I will be as an educator.

I found the following thought in FAE especially powerful and thought provoking: “No teacher can escape the role of a philosopher because they live out their personal philosophies every time they enter the classroom.” How we define and present ourselves as individuals and educators will have an impact on every student we touch. Will the impact be critical or insignificant, positive or negative, sustained or fleeting? This quoted sentiment, and the ambiguity it provokes, is as intimidating as it is empowering